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AUTHOR Morriss, Susan B.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of faculty participation on strategic change within higher education. An open-ended questionnaire was completed by seven individuals from Singapore and the United States who had had experience with higher education strategic planning and change as both faculty and administrators in Australia, Canada, Singapore, and the United States. It was found that all of the respondents agreed on the necessity of involving stakeholders, particularly the faculty, in strategic change. Many also pointed to the difficulty of getting quality participation from faculty, due to the fact that faculty often have a narrow perspective, that faculty participation involves a large commitment of time, and that faculty are often reluctant to address complex issues or problems. Respondents emphasized the negative impact of overly hierarchical and bureaucratic organizational structures, which were more typical in Singapore than elsewhere. The comments also emphasized the impact that organizational culture, planning processes, reward structures, and institutional mission can have on faculty participation in strategic change. Suggestions for encouraging and improving faculty participation were also offered. (Contains 32 references.) (MDM)

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# Strategic Change and Faculty Participation:

# Problems and Possibilities

By

Susan B. Morriss

Lecturer

Nanyang Technological University

National Institute of Education

School of Education

469 Bukit Timah Road

Singapore 259756

(65) 460-5213

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**Dolores Vura**
**Editor**
**AIR Forum Publications**

**Strategic Change and Faculty Participation: Problems and Possibilities**

**Abstract**

This paper considers two important topics, strategic change and participation. The study reviews why participation is seen as necessary in higher education, why participation seems not to have aided strategic planning and change processes, and if those processes are inherently flawed. Information from interviews with the selected persons experienced as administrators *and* as faculty and from different countries (Canada, England, Singapore, and the United States) provides the foundation for the discussion how participation and processes can be improved and facilitated.

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# Strategic Change and Faculty Participation: Problems and Possibilities

## Introduction

As higher education institutions grapple with financial problems, the pressure of technological advances, enrollment shifts, and the need to have a transforming vision of the future, the development or implementation of changes becomes increasingly likely. This responsibility can be seen as a great opportunity or a very threatening situation. The latter perspective flows from past experiences with strategic plans and processes that had little impact on the organization, innovations that held much promise but were not accepted and incorporated into existing programs, or resistance to mandated policies.

Yet it seems illogical that these experiences (may we call them failures?) occurred. Each plan was carefully crafted with great attention given to the participation of all constituencies – faculty, students, administrators, and support staff. Every committee had representation from each constituent group. Workshops or weekend retreats were provided to ensure that everyone understood the process and the issues. Significant financial and human resources were allocated and the participants contributed significant effort.

These steps were taken because participation was considered necessary and desirable: decisions would not be accepted or implemented without consultation. Well-known authors on organization theory (Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Yukl, 1994), on higher education (Birnbaum, 1988; Chan, 1987; Floyd, 1985, Sinnot and Johnson, 1996) and on strategic planning (Bryson, 1995; Dolence and Norris, 1995; Keller, 1983) supported and guided the need for participation in decision making and strategic planning in order to improve quality and acceptance. Yet in many instances, the decisions were not implemented and the goals were not achieved fully.

This paper considers issues relating to faculty participation and proposes some improvements for future involvement of constituents in strategic change processes. Based on issues identified in the literature, information was gathered from persons experienced as administrators and as faculty and provides the basis for further discussion of the problems and prospects of improving processes and the results of participation.

## Literature Review

The literature review focuses on specific aspects of participation and strategic change and planning: 1) why participation is necessary, 2) why participation may not result in the planned change, and 3) possible problems with the change process.

### Why Participation is Necessary in Higher Education

One perspective found in the literature is that higher education organizations are similar to other organizations, and therefore, research on organizational productivity, job satisfaction, and participation is valid. Floyd (1985) provides a excellent summary of the research. The general assumptions are that more participation results in higher job satisfaction, increased commitment to the organization, greater acceptance of changes, higher likelihood of supporting the implementation of changes, and increased productivity. Higher education researchers (Chan, 1988; Dill and Helms, 1988; Harvey, 1987; Heller, 1982; Marcus and Smith, 1996; Miller, 1996) accept these concepts, adding that participation facilitates ownership and commitment to the organization, promotes the legitimacy of processes, expands the number of ideas and alternatives proposed during decision making, and encourages communication among faculty and administration. There also appears to be agreement that lack of participation leads to faculty alienation, and resistance to change, as well as the opposites to all the positive benefits listed above.

Floyd (1985) further supports the need for participation in higher education by applying the criteria of the Vroom and Yetton normative decision model. She identifies four characteristics which suggest the need for consultative decision making processes in higher education: 1) Leaders lack the information necessary to make the decision alone, 2) problems are unstructured, 3) faculty acceptance of the decision is crucial to its implementation, and 4) acceptance of an autocratic decision is unlikely (p. 8).

Another view of faculty participation perceives that it flows directly from the historical traditions of academic governance (Dill and Helms, 1988; Floyd, 1985; Miller and Seagren, 1993) and is supported by the 1966 AAUP/ACE/AGB "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" with its clearly defined roles for faculty and administration. Dill and Helm (1988) indicate that "shared responsibility or authority" as a form of governance has diminished with the advent of strategic planning, increased state and federal regulation and involvement, and more frequent use of entrepreneurial and autocratic decision making. They postulate that traditional governance is being replaced with consultative decision making, which involves: 1) early consultation, 2) joint formulation of procedures, 3) time to develop responses, 4) availability of information, 5) adequate feedback, and 6) communication of the decision (p. 328). Chan (1987) also notes that emphasis on presidential leadership and top-down approaches may diminish timely and adequate participation, thus reducing the power of faculty in decision making.

Research on participation patterns of faculty provides detail on faculty perceptions. Marcus and Smith (1996) found that greater involvement increased faculty support for processes and contributed to higher motivation and acceptance of the process. Reyes and Smith (1987) determined that participation varied across ranks and was affected by job experience and personal interests. Lyon (1989) established that faculty participation in governance was substantial, about two-thirds of the

faculty surveyed, and that faculty felt that they had the least influence at the institutional level. Kissler (1997) found that faculty advisory groups had differing levels of the influence over financial decisions and educational policy decisions.

Thus, there are several theoretical and historical reasons for viewing participation as a necessary part of decision making processes, though no best way for this to occur can be defined. Faculty do participate to varying degrees and perceive participation to influence processes and decisions.

Participation and Implementation of Planned Change

Various authors suggest that implementation of plans and change may not proceed as expected even after participation. Davies (1985) and Heller (1982) identify several reasons for the lack of success, some of which are common assumptions about faculty involvement and all of which imply problems with participation: 1) faculty fail to see the big picture, 2) faculty lack loyalty to the institution, being loyal only to their discipline, 3) departments competing for resources have difficulty cooperating, and 4) governance structures and authority often are convoluted.

Other researchers (Harvey, 1997; Beck and Sera, 1997) reinforce the difficulty that faculty may have overcoming their departmental perspective; focusing on broader, institutional-wide issues; and developing shared goals and objectives. Dolence and Norris (1995) add that "too often key constituents are insulated from the harsh political and economic realities while expecting their compliance and conformance with strategies for the future" (p. 86), thus, recognizing problems with communication and understanding. Beck and Sera (1997) observe that faculty are asked to give up or put off other important activities in order to participate which adds to the conflict around participation and implementation. Chan (1987) further suggests that lack of time, motivation, and expertise in the problem area make faculty participation complex. Harvey (1997) adds that faculty may be unwilling to

make hard decisions, but they also refuse to give up the right to make them. Heller (1982) indicates that faculty are seen by the administration as unreasonable, inflexible and self-serving in decision-making processes.

O'Toole (1995) offers further insight into implementation issues by considering the broader, but related issue of resistance to change. He suggests that people resist because change threatens their belief system and even their existence: they dislike having another person's will forced upon them. In a similar vein, Keller (1997-98) proposes that too often there is a failure to consider human nature when dealing with change. An additional factor may be that leaders rather than followers are responsible for initiation of change (Guskin, 1996).

A final perspective may be that participation is overrated. Keller (1997-98) suggests that participation has been encouraged with the hope that involvement will result in a consensus for change, but adds ". . . no such process has ever resulted in a major change at any university, or is ever likely to do so" (p. 18). Conway (1984) identifies several myths related to participation and decision making, one being that participation is necessary for people to accept and implement change and another that participation in the development of goals is necessary for their accomplishment. He proposes that participation may enhance results but is not necessary for change. It is more important to have clear, specific goals created by someone, than poor goals created by everyone.

Thus, multiple reasons can be identified for the failure of participation to guarantee the implementation of change. They range from problems of faculty perspectives and priorities to the difficulty of communicating and understanding the reality of a situation. In addition, reaction to change, resistance or acceptance, varies by the individual. Lastly, expectations of the results of participation may be unrealistic. Participation may reduce but not solve or eliminate the problems of implementation.

Problems with the Change Process

In many cases, participation and implementation of change occur within a strategic or rational planning process. Some critics, such as Mintzberg in *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning* (1994), propose that there are fundamental problems with the concepts of the rational planning process. Mintzberg (1994) points out that the strategic planning process may become the focus, more important than the plan or action on the plan. He notes problems with the assumption of rationality and the conservative, incremental nature of the process. Stacy (1993) takes a different approach to understanding development and change in organizations, incorporating chaos theory concepts. He suggests that long-term planning, rational planning, and strategic planning are based on faulty assumptions about causality and that it is necessary to revise frames of reference on how organizations change (p. 11)

Other authors have focused on strategic planning processes in higher education. Schmidtlein and Milton (1988-89) found that many efforts to implement planning processes in higher education failed or had no long term results. Among the problems, they felt that planning processes usually did not mesh with campus decision making (p. 17). Dolence and Norris (1995) emphasize that planning has not been transformational, agreeing with Mintzberg that there has been "too much planning and too little genuine strategic thinking" (p. 85). They also suggest that processes are not designed for rapid change and that crucial linkages have been missing, such as between academic program planning and strategic planning. Dill (1996) notes that strategic planning in many universities may "have been more symbolic than real" and resulted in "superficial exercises which attempted to avoid difficult decisions" (p. 36).

However, not all perspectives on strategic planning and change processes are negative. Hargreaves (1995) suggests that the lessons of chaos theory may not apply equally well to business

organizations and educational institutions and that some form of planning must continue. He adds that control theory may better address weaknesses in current planning than chaos theory. And in Dill (1996), the real focus is the presentation of several examples of successful implementation through "sustained collegially derived processes" (p. 37).

Keller (1997) provides a very positive perspective on strategic planning, noting that while there have been failures, there have also been a myriad of successes. He recognizes that change is problemmatic and that "strategic initiatives require a difficult combination of thought, insight, daring, and persuasiveness that few persons possess" (p. 159). He goes on to identify essential factors to success.

In summary, there appear to be problems with change and strategic planning processes, but that adaptation is possible and necessary. The uniqueness of each organization must be considered to develop the best combination of participation, planning, and implementation.

## Background

The author's interest in strategic change and faculty participation was piqued by recently watching and participating in a particularly unsuccessful attempt at strategic planning. Past experience with strategic planning had been as the person organizing and managing a strategic planning process, but a new role, faculty member, was played in the recent exercise. Seeing and feeling the frustration of the participants, both faculty and administration, raised questions about how and why the situation ended so badly. While the author has many opinions about the process and participation, it seemed worthwhile to ask others who have experienced planning in both roles for their perspectives on the issues identified in the literature review..

The participants were selected because they have experience with higher education strategic planning and change as administrators *and* as faculty. This respected experience also spans several

different educational systems (Australia, Canada, England, Singapore, and the United States), and various types of institutions. Figure 1 briefly describes the experience of the respondents.

| Respondents | Current Position | Previous Experience |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Dean, Singapore | Faculty & Division Head, Singapore |
| 2 | Faculty, USA | Vice President, USA |
| 3 | Faculty, USA | Director, Institutional Research & Planning, USA |
| 4 | Director, Support Unit, Singapore | Administrator & Faculty, Australia<br>Faculty, Singapore |
| 5 | Faculty, USA | Associate Dean, USA |
| 6 | Faculty, Singapore | Dean, Canada |
| 7 | Faculty, Singapore | Program Director & Faculty, England |

Figure 1. Background of Respondents

Information was gathered using an open-ended questionnaire that was emailed to all participants in January 1998. The questions sought to ascertain the level of commitment to participation by the respondents, identify participation problems from their double perspective, illicit comments on the issues raised in the literature, and gather suggestions for improvement. The questionnaire is reproduced below as Figure 2. In two cases, the respondents requested a personal interview rather than providing a written response. Material taken from the responses provides the foundation for further discussion.

**Strategic Change and Faculty Participation**
**An Email Questionnaire**

Participation of university stakeholders is considered necessary, if not essential, to identifying, planning for, and implementing strategic change.

1. Why do you agree or disagree with this statement? Please provide examples from you experience if possible.
2. What problems have you experienced with faculty participation? As a faculty member. As an administrator.
3. What relation do you see between the success or failure of faculty participation and the following factors?
   a. Organizational culture and leadership
   b. Planning processes
   c. Reward structure
   d. Institutional mission and vision
4. Based on your experience, what suggestions would you offer to institutional planners regarding faculty participation and change?

Figure 2. Questionnaire on Strategic Change and Faculty Participation

## Perspectives on Faculty Participation and Strategic Change

### Need for Faculty Participation

Not too surprisingly, all respondents agreed to the necessity of involving stakeholders, particularly the faculty, and most were very committed to the concept. The reasons for this support included recognition of the education level and knowledge level of faculty and the need to gather ideas from a wide range of sources. Two comments were particularly pertinent: "Within the context of complex change and discontinuity, the perspective of those at the top having all the information is no longer true." and "All good ideas about the future of an institution do not reside with the administrative leadership nor its planner." Another respondent boldly stated, "Faculty should identify issues for the agenda." With the involvement of faculty and other stakeholders, there was an expectation of greater ownership of the problem and the solution.

However, some cautionary notes were sounded. One respondent noted that "all groups do not participate in the same way or at the same time. Neither do they have the same level of influence on the ultimate decision." Another indicated that the administration should work with the primary stakeholders, involving only the people most relevant to a particular situation.

### Problems Experienced

The comments relating to the problems experienced with faculty participation were similar to those described in the literature. It was interesting to realize that the focus of individual comments seemed more related to the long-term experience of the respondent than to their present position. The primary problem identified was the difficulty of getting quality participation from faculty. The comments emphasized three aspects of this problem.

The first aspect dealt with the perception that faculty have a very narrow perspective and are not well-informed about the issues confronting the institution. One respondent said, "Faculty have a

narrow perspective – teach, a little research, some consulting." Other comments suggested a lack of interest by faculty. One noted, "Most student and faculty members are too concerned with their own tasks/activities/priorities to care much about their institution's strategic future." While another wrote, "Typically, some members are not interested, while others would like to argue and modify the punctuation in the final plan." Other respondents focused on the quality of input, stating "Participation and problem solving is difficult because everyone see the problem differently, has different understandings." and "Faculty often provide only minor substantive input, usually in the form of resistance." One respondent did note that becoming well-informed may be difficult even if desired, stating "it [is] difficult to get a handle on issues that are impacting the university and the true goals of the College and Central Administration. My primary source of information . . . is the local newspaper."

Another aspect is the time-consuming nature of participation. Several respondents mentioned the "great amount of time involved". One person wrote "Academics are generally well-opinionated and articulate, and do not easily accept criticism as well as other people's points of view. . . . It takes time to let everyone have their say."

Lastly, quality participation may be difficult because of a reluctance to address complex issues or problems. As one respondent put it, "Faculty members ask/demand more participation in an institution's budgeting process until they find out that difficult decisions need to be made . . . It's interesting then how decisions get left to the administration, because 'it's really their job anyway'."

Factors Affecting Participation

The third part of the questionnaire sought reactions to factors identified through the literature review as important to faculty participation: organizational culture and leadership, planning processes, reward structure, and institutional mission and vision.

## Organizational Culture

The comments emphasized the great impact organizational culture can have, ranging from "especially important" to "self-evident" and also recognized the complex nature of organizational culture. One respondent stated, "Institutional history and tradition is extremely important in setting expectations for faculty participation . . . It is often difficult to get such participation started if it has not been the norm." Another participation noted, "There are many cultures within the organization, resulting in limited exposure to other faculties and professional programs by individual faculty members. This is reflected in the attitudes and loyalties of the faculty, especially young faculty."

Strong leadership also was considered necessary by some, exemplified by statements such as, "Credible and strong leadership is key. Success or failure will largely depend on the ability of the leader to understand the culture of the group or institution." and "If you have a strong leader and clear goals, there will be higher involvement."

From the comments about organizational culture, the cultural contrast among different systems and its importance became apparent, particularly between Singapore and other systems. Comments emphasized the negative impact of an overly hierarchical, bureaucratic organizational structure: "A hierarchical structure reinforces non-involvement – no power, not my job – which is typical in Singapore." It was suggested that faculty perceive the situation as "pseudo-consultation" and thus, ideas and suggestions have no effect because the decisions are made prior to consultation. In addition, little information is available about what is happening at the administrative level. Another respondent listed characteristics of an organization supportive of participation by contrasting with the Singapore situation. Characteristics included highly transparent leadership and finances, sharing of information and consulting with staff, known priorities, accessibility to top leadership, less concern about process, and genuinely valuing people's involvement in development. It was very clear that problems are

intensified by the particular culture of the organization and its readiness for both strategic change and participation.

## Planning Processes

As expected, the planning process was seen either to support or negate participation. One participant emphasized, "But probably the most important thing . . . is convincing the participants about the necessity and usefulness of such an exercise, and focusing them on the success indicators of such a collective soul-searching exercise!!" Another respondent noted the danger of faculty feeling that the agenda has been predetermined, while another added, "Trust is also important, i.e., no hidden agendas on the part of the leader otherwise people just won't follow."

The problem of the strategic change or planning process becoming more important than its purpose or implementation was recognized. From the administrative aspect, the annual cycle, monitoring, collecting data, and writing reports was the focus while the faculty perspective saw more deadlines, more meetings, and little action. One respondent suggested that there was a lack of consistency in organizational approaches to participation, writing that institutions "while steeped in a tradition of collegial decision making, also have a very weak tradition of codifying their procedures for achieving collegial participation. These institutions also have a habit of bypassing these procedures with new 'special' and 'one-time only' ones when planning processes are established." This failure to use existing structures lessens the credibility of the change process and brings it into conflict with organizational culture.

An additional process problem was seen to be the discontinuity between the timing of participation, usually based on the academic calendar, and the budget allocation cycle. A respondent noted that this difference and the related time lag can affect motivation levels of participants and the momentum of plans. In addition, one respondent recognized that outcomes and measures established

as part of the process are not easily changed, even when it is known that they are not appropriate. After the difficulties of developing the measures, reopening the discussion is not welcomed. Another dilemma related to the distribution of information. Instead of electronic capabilities improving the effectiveness of communication, it may add to information overload. From the administrative view, email and the Internet offer quicker ways of distributing reports and gathering information. However, without an established focus or priority, faculty merely have more reading with no additional understanding.

## Reward Structures

The issue of reward structure is very complex and received a wide variety of comments. Two respondents were very outspoken about not believing in external rewards for participation. One indicated, "Strategic thinking relates to the heart and soul of the institution/group/ organization. If members cannot commit to the exercise, they probably don't belong!" Others offered different perspectives on reward structures. One participant noted that the answers might be very different depending upon the kind of institution, such as the contrast between a major research institution and a liberal arts college. Another suggested that academic reward and recognition for faculty was tied to the discipline and not the institution, "Financial growth and professional growth is more associated with a willingness to move to other institutions than success in the promotion and tenure process of a single institution (as shown in salary studies). For this reason it is not often in the best interest of "good" faculty to become involved in institutional governance or planning."

The respondents agreed that change and processes must be perceived as beneficial to the organization and to its people and that what the organization values will be very apparent to those within the system. One person commented about one system saying, " There are no great rewards for managers using democratic leadership, [the administration] just wants the job to get done. How is not

a concern to evaluators unless it affects the consequences." One respondent added that if the rewards are for research or length of service rather than for hard work or participation, faculty know it.

Institutional Mission and Vision

The final factor considered was the relation of participation to institutional mission and vision. Opinions varied about the important of mission and vision from "no impact at all" to "essential". One person noted that it is very easy to have a statement, but very difficult to implement it. Faculty will perceive any contradictions between words and actions. Another focused on the need for shared development of the mission/vision, stating "Unless they [faculty] have an opportunity to 'buy' into the institution and feel they are making a valued contribution to it, they quickly become disinterested, uncommitted, and disconnected."

A third respondent thought the institutional mission and vision "must serve as the criteria on the basis of which resources are allocated". This respondent added that often participants in planning processes feel that the mission, vision and goals are stated so generally that they are useless as resource allocation criteria, but rarely does an institution acknowledge this criticism and redo these key statements. The result is that many unstated criteria are then used which ultimately undermine the credibility of the planning process.

Possibilities for Participation

In the final section of the questionnaire, the respondents offered suggestions for improving participation and processes that ranged from broad concepts to specific actions. The suggestions are divided into the areas of faculty participation encouragement, organizational culture issues, aspects of reward, and process improvement. In addition to the consideration of comments made by the respondents, each section includes links to related suggestions found during the literature review.

## Encouraging Participation

Several respondents made comments relating to the encouragement of faculty participation. One very positive statement was, "With all the limitations, maximize faculty participation if you want to have effective change in a quality institution." Another emphasized the need to recognize that faculty are the most critical stakeholders in the university, to "accept that they may be difficult to deal with at times, but that they can be creative, controversial , maybe, but certainly visionary" and to realize that without the opportunity to contribute, faculty "will remain distant and disenfranchised". A third respondent gave some practical advice, writing, "If you want more faculty participation, and you would like for the interaction not to be too contentious, try not to initiate increased participation when the institution is facing a crisis – financial or otherwise. Try to do it when things are calmer. Of course, among some groups, there may be little interest in increased participation until there is a crisis." Beck and Sera (1997) and Keller (1997) provide helpful guidance in this area, noting the importance of good communication, involving key people, and developing an environment where sharing of ideas and opinions is a safe activity.

## Organizational Culture Considerations

Closely linked to the above ideas are organizational culture issues. The consensus was that without openness and trust, effective participation and commitment to new university-wide goals or vision is very unlikely. As one participant mentioned, "If the broader culture does not support involvement, it is difficult for any institution to encourage participation." Another suggested that a culture of persistence was essential, saying "An organization culture and leadership that values and can deliver persistence in planning has a chance to get faculty participants to believe that each iteration of the planning process will not be the last. Thus, I believe that persistence increases the chances that

participants will take a longer term and less political view as they carry out their involvement in planning."

The importance of organizational culture is continually reinforced in publications. In a recent article, Leatherman (1998) quotes Ken P. Mortimer of the University of Hawaii System, "The basic argument against consulting is that you don't have time. Our argument has been if you consult and advise routinely, in the few cases where you have to move quickly, a system of trust will have been built up to allow you to move" (p. A9). Other authors (Dolence & Norris, 1995; Harvey, 1997) emphasize the need to consider the culture, to expand the knowledge base of those within it about crucial issues, to communicate well, and to spend time building a planning culture.

## Reward Structures

Consideration of incentives or rewards and the linkage to participation and change also flows from organizational culture issues. One person suggested that many faculty are not concerned with fundamental change and that reward structures have to exist that make it worth their while to participate. In her article, Chan (1987) provides several ideas for changing reward structures to be more supportive of participation, such as greater personal recognition and responsibility and clearer linking of changes and improvements.

## Process Improvement

Proposals from the respondents addressing the change process emphasized the need for transparency of the process to those participating, clear designation of responsibilities (recommendation versus decision making), and action related to participation. One respondent stated emphatically that in the process ". . . faculty must be clearly informed of the purpose, intent, and timelines of any strategic planning initiative, that their contribution is welcomed, and that what they

have to say will be valued and considered." In a related idea, a participant made a practical recommendation, saying:

> It is important to give an appropriate name to any committee which may be formed for the purpose of involving faculty in planning. . . . If an administration wants faculty advice on process, then the group involved should have the words 'advisory' and 'process' somewhere in the name. . . . The name of the committee may not affect the quality of its work . . . but it can affect the expectations of participants about their role and therefore their satisfaction with the results that are achieved as a consequence of that participation.

A third person noted, "In the eyes of most faculty members, committee work is time consuming and typically results in little more than a report that sits on some administrator's bookshelf. In addition to tangible rewards, there must be visible action and recognition on the part of the institution in regard to the work of the committee. Faculty have to see the effort as more than an 'academic exercise'." One respondent added that the environment is changing rapidly and opportunities must be seized. The process must give people the chance to test and respond quickly, therefore, blocks in the system must be minimized.

Lastly, what and how information is communicated as a part of the process was seen as very important to participation and successful change. Suggestions ranged from simple things like changing the tone of memos and reports and better use of summary documents to more complex ideas such as training courses for staff in effective written and verbal communication, and development of special formats for electronic distributions.

Within the literature on planning, there are many articles and books that offer suggestions on developing a process and how to facilitate participation. The author found the following among the most useful: Dill (1996), Dolence and Norris (1995), Haas (1997), Harvey (1997), Keller (1997), and

Young (1996). Each offers a different perspective, some being more theoretical while others are quite practice-oriented.

## Conclusion

While this paper may not offer new or exciting approaches to the improvement of faculty participation in the development and implementation of change, it does illustrate the problems and possibilities perceived by people experienced in faculty and administrative roles. Thus, the paper should help institutional researchers and planners in several ways. First, it refreshes our understanding of participation, its goals, its contributions, and related problems. Second, the study considers the relation between participation and change processes, looking at positive and negative factors. Third, the paper offers suggestions based on practice and theory to assist organizations with planning and implementing changes. And lastly, we are reminded to use what we know about planning and change, and about our institutions. If we know that our institutional culture does not encourage participation, don't expect it to be embraced with open arms. And if it is, make sure that the participation is used, valued, and recognized. If our culture is contentious but requires consultation and involvement, build and adapt the process around the culture. We must keep learning and creating as we deal with people and strategic change.

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